

## **“Get Up And Walk”**

**St. John’s – East Moline**

**John 5:1-9**

**05/25/25**

**Intro.** Imagine the scene that day around the Pool of Bethesda as Jesus walked through the gate into Jerusalem to encounter an endless sea of diseased and deformed bodies. They were begging for aid from the pilgrims as they dragged themselves to what they hoped would be healing waters. But those waters were, in fact, filled with sickness. As the desperately diseased entered the waters, blood, pieces of skin, scabs and bits of bandages floated around. Polluted with all that suffering, the waters of Bethesda became a soup of ills and pool of human slime.

The miracle that allows the man in our Gospel and all of us to emerge alive from this world of slime is found in the powerful and life-giving words of Jesus when He tells us to “Get Up And Walk!”

### **I. Our Crippled Condition. (vv. 1-5, 7)**

**A.** As Jesus arrived on the scene he would have observed under people with every kind of sickness and deformity of body crowded together. Legend had it that an angel would come and stir up the waters allowing the first person to enter to be healed of their disease. So there they were – a collective representation of the devastating effects of sin upon the world - waiting for the waters to be stirred.

Our Gospel directs our attention to one of those sad and helpless souls; a man who had been an invalid for 38 years. All those years he had been hopelessly looking for help and healing. Every day he had dragged himself to the street to beg for crumbs or coins just to survive. And who knows how many times he had come to this pool for healing. There, with hundreds of others, he hoped for a miracle to make him whole. He looked for someone to help him by carrying him to the pool, but it appears that his friends and family had abandoned him. So he desperately scratched and clawed his way to the waters only to have someone else step in ahead of him.

All his attempts to find help in his fellow man or to deliver Himself from his crippling condition by his own efforts had failed. He was not the man that God had created Him to be, and His life was not the one God had intended for him. He was one of those distorted creatures warped and broken by the fall.

*Transition:* Although it may not be as noticeable on the outside this is a fitting description of us all, because we all suffer from the same crippling disease that plagued those gathered at Bethesda.

**B.** That disease is sin. It does not always manifest itself with the same physical symptoms. Eventually, though, because the wage of sin is death, it will. All people suffer from this disease of the soul; one that makes us unclean and detestable in God’s sight. It is a sickness that left untreated would keep us all out of the kingdom of glory and leave us hopelessly condemned to eternal death. [Nt. Rev. 21]

The evidence of this moral and spiritual disease is seen throughout human history. The fratricide of Abel at the hands of his brother Cain, the pervasive wickedness leading to the flood, the sexually immoral life-style of Sodom and Gomorrah resulting in their destruction, the slaughter of innocent children in Bethlehem by Herod, the almost instant deaths of Ananias and Sapphira who lied to the Holy Spirit – these are only a few of the Bible’s testimonies against the deadly spread of sin in the world.

And our generation is no better. Bombs are sent off to indiscriminately kill and maim, the legalization and promotion of the very sins that were condemned in Sodom and Gomorrah, unborn children slaughtered in their mother’s wombs, and in the church people who do not take their faith seriously but lie to the Holy Spirit – these are only a few of the ways in which the crippling effects of sin are seen in our world.

And then there is the sin sickness that infects each of us personally. It manifests itself in our moments of anger or hostility, jealousy or envy, lust or forbidden desire. Symptoms include loving our spouse and children, our activities and lifestyle, our income and possessions more than we do our Lord, Jesus. It can be seen in the way we have lied to the Holy Spirit by breaking our promise to live a godly life, to make diligent use of the means of grace, and to regularly attend the services of God’s house. All of this should be as obvious to us as the invalid’s lifeless limbs were to him that we suffer from the inherited disease of sin – that we are sinful from birth, sinful from the time our mothers conceived us.

Sadly, like the man in our Gospel we have often been guilty of looking in vain for help and healing in all the wrong places. We turn to other people, waiting for someone to lift us up and bring us healing, but they all

disappoint us. The people we love abandon us, because they are all just as crippled and diseased by sin as we are. We desperately scratch and claw our way through life, hoping that we can heal ourselves by our own efforts. We fall victim to Satan's gospel that tells us, "You are really not so bad. Sin is only a minor illness, so as long as you do your best to live a good life you can overcome it and enter glory." But that is a lie that will leave us as helpless and hopeless as the man in our lesson.

*Transition:* The good news is when we have found help in no one else and have lost all hope in ourselves we can look up and Jesus will be there to help and heal us. It is here in this horrible slop of sin that He was born under the law to redeem us. It is here in this abominable soup of ills that Jesus wades in to be baptized by John to take upon Himself the sins of the world. It is here in this pool of human slime that Jesus dives in to suffer and die so that we may arise alive and whole, to walk before the LORD in righteousness and holiness forever.

## II. Christ Asks And Delivers. (vv. 6-9a)

**A.** In our Gospel Jesus asks what may seem like an obvious question, but it is important. Our Lord sees the crippled man lying there and with loving compassion asks him, ***"Do you want to be healed?"*** This question involved three things. First, he wanted the man to recognize the crippling nature of his disease. Second, he wanted the man to decide if he wanted to continue to live in the same wretched way he had been. And third, he wanted the man to trust that He was able to deliver him and make him into the person God created him to be so that he could walk in the way God had intended.

Today, right here and now, Jesus is asking the same question of all of us. "Do you want to be forgiven and healed from your sin? Do you recognize and confess that sin has crippled and distorted you? Do you want to remain the way you have been, sinful, unclean and living in ways that are harmful to you and detestable to God? And do you believe that Jesus is able to deliver you from your sin and to recreate you into the person that God has always wanted you to be and enable you to live the life He has always intended for you? If your response is, yes...

**B.** Then know this Jesus is telling you, right now, get up and walk in newness of life. He has taken away your sin and is renewing you by the Holy Spirit to walk in God's ways. Just like that, because you are hearing it, it is done, because Jesus' Word has the power to deliver you from sin, death and the power of the devil.

In our Gospel Jesus delivered the crippled man with only His Word. He did not lift the man up and carry him to the pool. He did not even touch him, but with just His life-giving Word He made right and whole and straight what had been distorted and broken and warped. He did not require the crippled man to crawl to Him or to do anything to be healed. He simply said, ***"Get up, take your bed, and walk," and at once the man was healed..." (v.8-9a)***

In the same way our spiritual healing through the forgiveness of sins and our ability to get up and walk in a new way is something that is accomplished by the power of Christ's Word, alone. Jesus does not require anything from us – we were once crippled even dead in our trespasses and children of God's wrath, but God has made us alive and whole again in Christ - it is by grace we are saved through faith and this is not our own doing; it is the gift of God. We are now recreated in Christ Jesus to be the holy people God planned for us to be and to walk in the good works God has always prepared for us. [Nt. Eph. 2]

There in the waters of Holy Baptism, when Christ's Word is connected with simple water, we are born again from above. The old sinful nature is drowned, and we are made new, as the Holy Spirit is poured into our hearts. With sins washed away, we are united with Christ so that just as He rose from the dead we too may walk in newness of life.

A true miracle occurs when we hear, sing and confess Christ's Word because it has the power to heal us and deliver us from our life of sin. With His Word Jesus calls us to repentance and puts faith in our hearts, so that we receive exactly what He says - forgiveness of sins resulting in a renewed delight in God's will and desire to walk in His ways.

In the Lord's Supper, the power of Jesus' Word attached to common bread and wine, makes it possible for us to eat and drink the very body and blood that He gave on the cross for us. When we eat and drink of it in

faith we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation along with the Spirit's power to get up and walk in the light of Christ. Jesus and His Word is the miracle that allows us to step out of this world's pool of human slime. *Transition:* So now what? Having been delivered, healed and restored – what now? Well, do it, "Get up and walk!"

### III. Now Walk... (v.9b)

**A.** In our Gospel when the man was healed he did not just lay there. He did what Jesus said. He got up, took his mat, and walked. Later we are told where that walk took him. He walked to the temple. He did not continue to hang around the filthy pool, but went to the place where God had promised to be present with His people. He probably went to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving for His deliverance and to show the priests and everyone there what Christ had done for Him.

Shouldn't it be the same for us? Having been delivered, healed and restored isn't this the place for us to be? This is where God promises to meet with us and to pour out His gifts. This is where Jesus is present with His powerful Word to continue His healing and renewing work in us through the Holy Spirit. This is His house where we come to offer our sacrifices of thanksgiving and to declare His praises. When Jesus tells us to get up and walk it is only natural that our walk should lead us here.

**B.** Later on when Jesus met up with the man, again, He taught the man something about the way he should walk. Jesus said to him, ***"See you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you."*** (v.14) Jesus reminded him of the glorious gift he had been given, the miracle of deliverance that had come to him through His Savior's powerful Word. Then Jesus warned him to walk away from sin.

In the same way Jesus has called each of us who have been delivered by the power of His Word to remember the gifts he has given us and to walk away from sin. He invites to walk a new way - to walk in the light of the Lamb. He calls upon us to search the scriptures so that we may know what God's good and pleasing will for us is and promises us that the Holy Spirit will work in us to desire and do those things. Jesus directs us to walk in the light and to let our light shine before others, so that they may see what He is doing in us and give glory to our God and Father.

**C.** This is one more thing that we learn from the man in our Gospel about what it means to be delivered and to walk as a new creature. The man in our Gospel, who for years had no one to help him into the pool when the waters were stirred, became God's instrument to help others. God made him a witness to the healing power of Christ's life-giving Word. When he got up and walked others were led to Jesus.

This is what it means for us to walk in newness of life and to walk in the light of Christ. God has made us to be people who will help others to know Christ and to hear His saving Word. Every day we get up and walk into the places we work, through the halls of our schools, or around our neighborhoods in ways that will make a difference in the lives of others. With the eyes of Christ, we see the suffering around us. We see the painful effects of sin in the world and in the lives of people who are crippled and powerless. With the love and compassion of Christ we are the ones who can pick them up and carry them to Christ and His living waters. With Christ's Word we can offer the same help and hope and healing that we, ourselves, have received.

**Concl.:** By God's grace we are not doomed to live and die as distorted creatures, warped and broken by sin. With His forgiving and life-giving Word Christ has lifted us up out this world's pool of human slime to walk in newness of life. So I say to all of you whose names have been written in the Lamb's book of life, "Get up and Walk!" Amen.